

May  
2022

# State of Dorset Population



Change in Dorset's demographic make-up can have an impact on service demands and provision but can also affect housing demand and business needs.

Changes in our population are shaped by both natural change (births and deaths) and by migration into and out of Dorset.

By projecting future population change, we can plan to target services and resources to the places where they will be needed most.

Big Numbers Box

**4.0%**

projected population change  
2021-2031

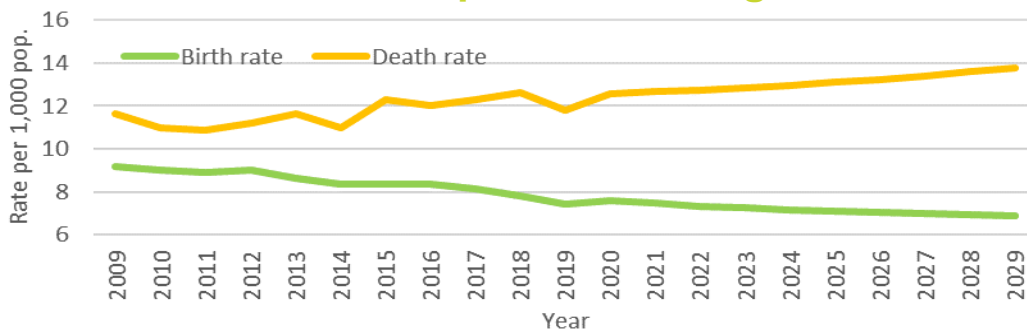
**379,800** total  
population  
in 2020

**6%pa** +65's projected  
population change  
2021-2031

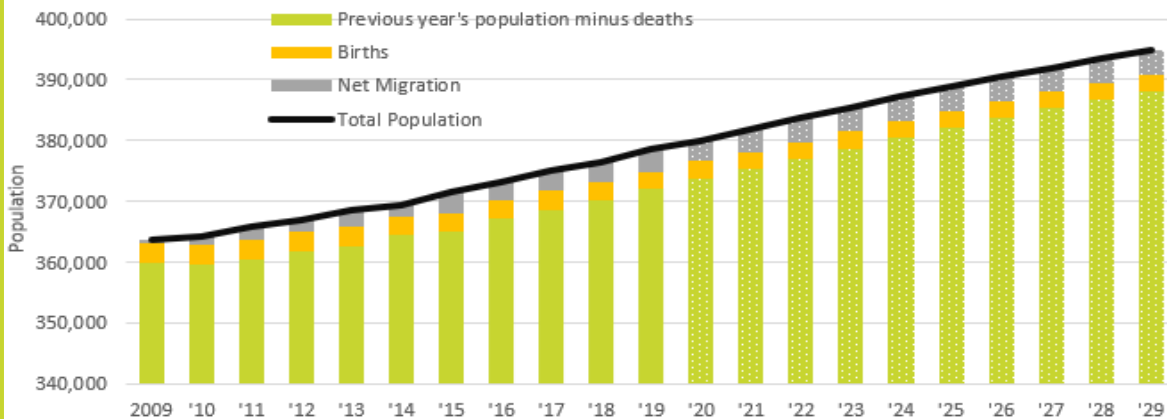
**23,100** Total increase in  
+65's 2011-2021, an  
increase of 2.2%pa

**120** decrease in  
0-15 yrs age  
group  
2011-2021

## Box 1: Population Change



In the last five years, the death rate has steadily increased by 10%, while the birth rate has decreased by 14% as shown in the graph above. This pattern is projected to continue over the next ten years. Total number of births in the year 2019-2020 were 2638, total deaths were 4,957. Due to the net decline in natural change (births minus deaths) population growth is driven by migration into the area. The graph below shows the contribution net migration makes to population growth. Net migration in the year 2019-2020 was 3,164.



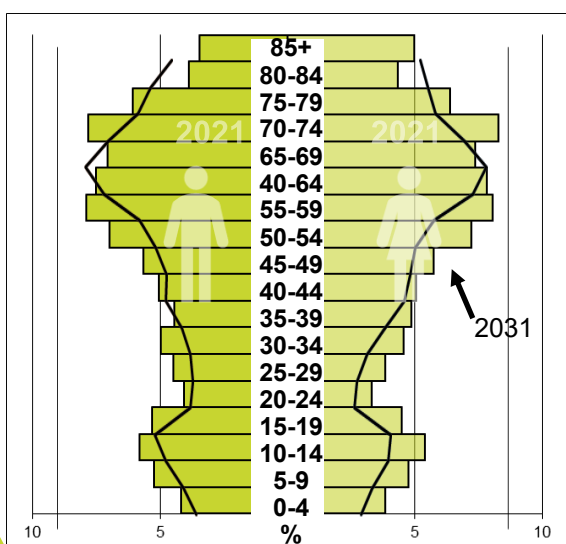
The figure above shows the components of change for each year. Note years 2020 onwards are projected population. Over the period 2010-2020, Dorset's population grew by 15,474, a growth of 4% compared with 7% nationally. Over the period 2019 to 2029, the population is projected to grow by another 4% (16,300) compared to 5% nationally.

## Box 2: Age breakdown of population

	2011	2021	2031
<b>0-15 yrs</b>	59,700	59,900	55,100
<b>16-64 yrs</b>	215,400	208,200	202,600
<b>65+ yrs</b>	90,700	113,900	139,400
<b>Total</b>	363,600	378,500	397,100

The median age of the Dorset council area was 46-47 in 2011. This increased to 50-51 in 2021 and is projected to increase to 54 by 2031. The current median age for England is 40.5.

Dorset Council 2021 and 2031 population



Over the period 2011-2021, the number aged 65+ grew by 23,100 – up by 46% and is projected to increase by 25,600—up by 59% - to 2031. The proportion of the population aged 65+ continues to grow; from 25% in 2011 to 30% in 2021 and a projected figure of 35% in 2031.

In contrast Dorset's working age (16-64) population continues to fall; dropping by 7,270 between 2011-2021 and projected to drop by a further 5,600 by 2031.

Similarly the population of Dorset's children continues to decline; falling by 120 between 2011 and 2021 and projected to drop by a further 4,720 by 2031.

The top heavy shape of the population pyramid has changed little in the past 10 years and is not projected to change over the next ten. This is illustrated by the graph to the left which shows proportion of 5yr age groups for 2021 in the green bars, and 2031 the black line. Females are on the right of the graph, males the left. Aging of the early 60's baby boomers can be clearly seen - driving the bulge in the population between the ages of 55 to 74. This is further increased by net internal migration which is highest for the 60-64 age group. Migration out of the area by young adults is also clearly illustrated.

## Box 3: Census 2021

- Much of our data and therefore, how we understand the experiences and issues affecting people in Dorset, comes from the Census.
- The Census is carried out every 10 years and Census Day was on 21st March 2021.
- As the Census only happens every 10 years, there is likely to be considerable change in our understanding of the population.
- Census 2021 reflected shifting language and will help with our understanding of marginalised communities, for example asking about Armed Forces service, sexual orientation and gender identity.
- The Census is important not only for understanding communities but for ensuring that funding is directed where it is needed. Many organisations will use it to plan, predict and develop their services, based on population make-up and characteristics represented in the Census.

### Sources

The following datasets have been used throughout the bulletin:  
 20120 Mid-year estimates, Office for National Statistics  
 2019 Components of Population Change, Office for National Statistics  
 2019 based Dorset Council Continuity projections, Experimental, Dorset Council